

Message Text

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E.O.11652: N/A

SUBJ: ETHIOPIA HERALD STORY ON USIS

1. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 ISSUE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY ETHIOPIAN HERALD CARRIED WEEKLY REVIEW OF NEWS DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING ITEM CRITICAL OF DAVID OTTAWAY. ITEM ALSO IMPLIES THAT USIS ASSISTED OTTAWAY IN OBTAINING STORY MATERIAL ON DROUGHT WHICH WAS UNFAVORABLE TO ETHIOPIA.

2. IN PORTION OF COLUMN "THE WEEK THAT WAS" HERALD USED SECTION ON "WORLD HUNGER" WHICH INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:
QUOTE MEANWHILE IN ETHIOPIA, WHERE FAMINE HAS ALREADY CLAIMED UPWARDS OF 200,000 LIVES, ABOUT A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE ARE FACING DEATH AND STARVATION IN HARRARGIE REGION. MORE THAN 74,000 HAVE ALREADY FLED THEIR HOMES IN THE OGADEN TO SEEK SHELTER ELSEWHERE. ALL TOLD, 11 OF THE COUNTRY'S 14 ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS ARE NOW HIT BY DROUGHT.
"WITH SUCH STARK EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, ONE DAVID OTTAWAY WAS TELLING HIS WASHINGTON POST READERS THAT THE PEAK OF THE DROUGHT WAS OVER IN ETHIOPIA. IT COULD BE THE EFFECT OF THE COLD WAVE OR THAT OF TOO MUCH EXPOSURE TO HIS SEDUCTIVE ASSISTANT UP AT THE USIS -- WHATEVER THE CASE, OTTAWAY'S JAUNDICED REPORTING IS NOT DOING THE PROFESSION ANY CREDIT. UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

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ON MONDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 11, INFORMATION OFFICER CALLED

ON THE EDITOR OF HERALD AND ASKED HIM ABOUT ARTICLE. EDITOR CLAIMED HE WAS AWARE OF STORY AND THAT WHEN HE DISCUSSED IT WITH THE WRITER, HE WAS TOLD THAT "AN ETHIOPIAN WORKING AT USIS ALSO WORKS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST AS A STRINGER." SINCE THE EDITOR IS QUITE FAMILIAR WITH USIS AND KNOWS THAT NONE OF ITS EMPLOYEES SERVE AS STRINGERS FOR ANYONE, THIS EXCUSE HARDLY SEEMS PLAUSIBLE. WHAT IS MORE LIKELY, IS THE EDITOR WAS NOT AWARE OF STORY AND WAS TRYING TO PROTECT HIS REPORTER, WHO MAY HAVE OBTAINED INFORMATION CONCERNING ONE OF OTTAWAY'S PERIODIC VISITS TO USIS. AFTER POINTING OUT THAT STORIES OF THIS KIND SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CHECKED OUT SINCE THEY DEAL WITH DELICATE MATTERS THAT CAN HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES, THE IO ASKED THE HERALD EDITOR IF HE WOULD PUBLISH A LETTER SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT. THE EDITOR SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT "WOULD INSULT OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS," AND SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PUBLISH A REPLY IN THE LETTERS COLUMN. THE POST FEELS STRONGLY A REPLY IS CALLED FOR SINCE USIS HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT AND IDENTIFIED AS AN INSTRUMENT WHICH PLACES ETHIOPIA IN AN AWKWARD PUBLIC POSITION REGARDING USAID ASSISTANCE TO THE COUNTRY'S DROUGHT RELIEF PROGRAM. IT IS OUR FEELING THAT THE SWIPE AT USIS WAS INSPIRED BY A DISGRUNTLED ETHIOPIA DROUGHT RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE OFFICIAL WHO FEARS THAT AID TO ETHIOPIA WILL BE CUT BACK AS RESULT OF THE OTTAWAY ARTICLE AND IS ATTACKING ANY VISIBLE TARGETS TO BUILD HIS CASE. IF THIS ATTACK PIECE IS ALLOWED TO STAND UNCHALLENGED, WE FEEL CERTAIN THAT OUR CREDIBILITY WITH THE LOCAL MEDIA WILL SUFFER. WE, THEREFORE, SUGGEST AGENCY CONCURRENCE IN SENDING THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE HERALD: (BEGIN TEXT)

IN REFERENCE TO YOUR STORY IN THE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 ISSUE (THE WEEK THAT WAS -- PAGE 6), YOU REFER TO AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DAVID OTTAWAY OF THE WASHINGTON POST CONCERNING THE DROUGHT IN ETHIOPIA AND STATE THAT MR. OTTAWAY COULD HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY "TOO MUCH EXPOSURE TO HIS SEDUCTIVE ASSISTANT UP AT THE USIS..." THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT MR. OTTAWAY HAS NO ASSISTANT OF ANY KIND AT USIS AND THAT NONE OF OUR STAFF, EITHER AMERICAN OR ETHIOPIA, HAS PROVIDED MR. OTTAWAY WITH ANY MATERIAL CONCERNING DROUGHT CONDITIONS HERE. MR. OTTAWAY IS AN INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST EMPLOYED BY A PRIVATE CORPORATION, THE WASHINGTON POST, AND HIS OPINIONS AND STORIES IN NO WAY REFLECT OFFICIAL U.S. POLICY. (END TEXT)

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DECONTROL NOVEMBER 11, 1975.
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Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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